

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

September 17, 2024  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Mayor Robinson opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. and announced that the Council would hold an Executive Session for approximately 20 minutes pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to discuss a personnel matter.

At approximately 6:20 p.m., Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said the Executive Session would be extended for 15 more minutes.

2. Call to Order

The meeting resumed at 6:40 p.m. with Mayor Robinson presiding. She noted that members of the public are not allowed to disrupt the meeting, which includes talking out of turn or without permission, interrupting or making sounds when someone else is talking, or approaching Councilmembers or City employees who are staffing the meeting. If a person disrupts the meeting, the Mayor will issue a warning or may ask the person to leave the meeting. Ms. Robinson asked everyone to express themselves without name calling, taunting or disparaging others.

3. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Hamilton led the flag salute.

(a) Eastside Welcoming Week Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation declaring September 13-22, 2024, as Eastside Welcoming Week in Bellevue. He invited the community to seek out opportunities to learn, connect across differences and to take joint action to achieve a welcoming, equitable and inclusive community.

Karia Wong, representing the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), thanked the Council for the proclamation, which is deeply meaningful for all immigrants in Bellevue. She said this is also the time for the mid-Autumn festival to celebrate harvest, family and friends.

Adam Dibba, BDAN member and Executive Director of Africans on the Eastside, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said she moved to the United States 30 years ago and raised three daughters in Bellevue. She commented on the importance of being able to share with each other about our cultures and our values.

(b) National Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation

Councilmember Zahn read the proclamation declaring September 15 through October 15, 2024, as National Hispanic Heritage Month in Bellevue. She encouraged everyone to observe the month and to celebrate the contributions of our Hispanic neighbors with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities.

Rubi Mercado, representing the Sammamish High School Latino H.E.A.T. program, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She said the program is celebrating its 20-year anniversary.

Alexia Gonzales, a junior at Sammamish High School, said she is a proud member of the Latino community and a theatre kid. She said the theme for National Hispanic Heritage Month is Pioneers of Change: Shaping the Future Together. The theme is meant to capture a spirit of innovation, resilience and unity.

Zayuri Aguilar Garcia said National Hispanic Heritage Month salutes the vital contributions of the more than 62 million Latinos in the United States. She said Latino history is American history and it is a story of hard work, faith, pride and possibilities. She invited the Council and the public to join in celebrating this year. Angely Fuentes, a fellow student, was in attendance as well.

(c) Belle the Bobcat Proclamation

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation declaring Belle the Bobcat as the official Yuru-Chara mascot of the City of Bellevue. Her birthday is May 15 and she serves as an iconic symbol celebrating Bellevue's cultural ties to Japan.

Brad Jones, Megan Adams and Anna Yan, representing Visit Bellevue, thanked the Council for the proclamation. Mr. Jones said it is significant that in 2024, Visit Bellevue was able to launch Bellevue's first overseas marketing campaign to attract tourism from Japan. He said Belle will be appearing around town as a mascot at events and activities.

4. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Robinson suggested adding Agenda Item 8(a) to discuss the City Manager position and determine next steps.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, with the addition of Agenda Item 8(a), City Manager Position and Next Steps. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

#### 5. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days. Each person is allowed three minutes to speak.

Mayor Robinson said that anyone who does not get a chance to speak is welcome to email (Council@bellevuewa.gov) or call Councilmembers.

- (a) Susan Pappalardo, Co-Founder and President of SplashForward, expressed support for the preferred Airfield Park Master Plan. She said the park and its facilities will serve all ages and abilities. She said SplashForward has been working with the City since March 2022 to fund the aquatic center project. She noted the benefits of the aquatic center including recreation, swimming lessons and competition facilities.
- (b) Ellie Wang expressed support for the proposed aquatic center at Airfield Park. She said she is a competitive high-school swimmer and has been working with SplashForward over the past couple of years to raise awareness with the state legislature about the aquatic center. She commented on the importance of providing swimming lessons for the public and said the aquatic center will provide a safe, healthy gathering space for the community.
- (c) Subha Cherukuri said she has been working with a group of residents who are advocating for pickleball courts in Bellevue. She thanked City staff for listening to their request and for implementing several dual use courts on existing tennis courts. She expressed support for the proposed Airfield Park Master Plan, including pickleball courts.
- (d) Dale Shepardson said he is not opposed to building an aquatic center. However, he is opposed to building any structure on the landfill at Airfield Park that disturbs the landfill cap. He said there are 18 suspected contaminants in the soil and six confirmed contaminants in the groundwater. He highlighted information from the 2023 report regarding the site, which indicated the presence of a number of contaminants, including arsenic. He said he was not aware of any aquatic centers that have been built on former landfill sites. He noted pollution issues at Phantom Lake in 1982 related to runoff from the landfill at Airfield Park.

- (e) Valerie Martin, speaking on behalf of Eastgate resident Eric Fleischman, expressed concern about the Airfield Park Master Plan. Ms. Martin said Mr. Fleischman is excited about the prospect of building an aquatic center. However, he is concerned about disturbing the former landfill site and about potential impacts related to groundwater and runoff. Ms. Martin said Mr. Fleischman is concerned about the potential liability for the City and taxpayers. He suggested building the aquatic center at Bellevue College. He is interested in what the City will do to keep the community safe when developing the former landfill site.
  - (f) Kate Sinon shared a letter from a Bellevue resident, property owner and registered voter, Laura Pryor. The letter urges the Council to reject Resolution No. 10414 that would adopt the Airfield Park Master Plan. She said placing an aquatic center on the site is an unfair financial burden on Bellevue taxpayers. She said the City of Kirkland has rejected supporting a community pool multiple times due to cost concerns. She expressed concern about toxic materials on the site.
  - (g) Jessie Clawson, representing the owner of Crossroads Mall, said they look forward to participating in the upcoming Crossroads subarea planning effort. She said they are focused on owning and managing retail properties. There is a great mix of larger and smaller businesses at the shopping center and it serves as a gathering place for the community. She suggested that designating existing large retail spaces for higher mixed-use development offers the flexibility to repurpose the spaces when the opportunity arises. She said the addition of residential units helps to support the businesses. She expressed support for encouraging more small and unique businesses and residential development near the Rapid Ride line.
  - (h) Joe Kunzler thanked the Council for the Eastside Welcoming Week proclamation. He encouraged clear rules against hate speech and other disruptive behavior during public meetings, including Council meetings. He said it is important to keep investing in public transit. He thanked the Mayor and Councilmembers for their service.
  - (i) Alex Tsimerman suggested that the City hold town hall-type meetings with the public to allow questions and answers. He noted that the independent salary commission is currently reviewing Councilmembers' compensation.
6. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
  7. Report of the City Manager: None.
  8. Council Business and New Initiatives
    - (a) City Manager Position and Next Steps

Mayor Robinson said the process for appointing the next city manager led to an Executive Session tonight to discuss the qualifications of the acting city manager.

Joy St. German, Director, Human Resources Department, said staff collected input from the Council, Leadership Team and the community regarding the desired profile and qualifications of the next city manager. The Council decided to interview the acting city manager before deciding how to proceed. The City held two public forums for the acting city manager to respond to questions submitted in advance by the public.

Mayor Robinson recalled that the Council initially agreed to conduct an outside search and to create a professional profile for the job. Following input from the consultant, the Council decided to instead first interview the acting city manager. During the earlier Executive Session, the Council decided to add this agenda item to discuss the next steps.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said the Council interviewed the acting city manager against a robust profile created by the Council, staff and consultant. He expressed full confidence in the acting city manager and said she has demonstrated exceptional leadership and a deep understanding of the community. Mr. Malakoutian said she has a proven track record and strong policy development skills. He noted her attention to detail and commitment to public service as assets for the City.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to select Diane Carlson as the next city manager and to direct staff to begin negotiations for an employment contract, to be brought back along with an ordinance formally appointing Ms. Carlson to the position of city manager, for Council consideration and action at a future meeting. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Hamilton recalled that the job description and candidate profile created by the Council and others strongly pointed the Council in the direction of interviewing the acting city manager. He is confident that the Council has selected the right candidate and he noted that lessons were learned throughout the process. He said he has never heard any negative feedback about Diane Carlson. He said hiring her is a critical piece in Bellevue's future success.

Councilmember Stokes said Ms. Carlson has extensive local and regional government experience and in-depth knowledge about Bellevue. He said the city manager position is an extremely challenging job. He said there are numerous major initiatives in process and Ms. Carlson is the best choice for Bellevue.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked Ms. St. Germain, staff and the consultant for their work. Mr. Nieuwenhuis concurred with his colleagues' positive comments about Ms. Carlson. He said she is poised, experienced, accomplished, committed to the community, articulate, innovative, fair and accountable to residents as a whole.

Regarding the process, Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he initially favored a national search for city manager to meet additional candidates and hear new, diverse ideas. However, he believes Ms. Carlson would be an outstanding city manager.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciated all of the input regarding the desired city manager profile. She thanked Ms. Carlson for her interest in the permanent position and described her as

steady, thoughtful and responsive. Ms. Zahn commended Ms. Carlson's authenticity and long career in public service, noting that it will serve the City well. She said Ms. Carlson lives in and is committed to Bellevue.

Councilmember Lee said Ms. Carlson has proven to be a very effective acting city manager and has a long history with the City of Bellevue. However, he said he shared Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's initial interest in conducting a national search. He commended Bellevue's leadership in the region and said Ms. Carlson has the experience and character to continue to lead the City.

Mayor Robinson said the role of the city manager is the most important job in city government and the most important decision for the Council. She said the Council puts a tremendous amount of thought into the decision and could have conducted a national search. However, it is difficult to attract a viable candidate when the top choice is already acting in the position. In interviews conducted by City staff and the consultant with residents, businesses, Councilmembers, staff and community leaders, Ms. Carlson was consistently the top choice. Mayor Robinson said a city that is growing as fast as Bellevue with many risks and opportunities requires a city manager who can attract, hire and retain excellent staff, oversee a large biennial budget that responds to the changing needs of the community, and help us prepare for future demands. She said the opportunity to hire someone of Ms. Carlson's caliber and to have a smooth transition is an asset for the organization and the community. Mayor Robinson said she is grateful for the opportunity to hire Ms. Carlson, an already tested talent who can hit the ground running and be working at full capacity immediately.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Acting City Manager Carlson thanked the Council and expressed her commitment to the responsibilities of the city manager and to serving the community. She thanked everyone for their comments and confidence in her and said she looks forward to the future and working with the Council.

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:10 p.m.

9. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period August 1, 2024 - August 31, 2024.

- (b) Resolution No. 10412 authorizing execution of all documents necessary to implement settlement of the claim brought by Yuemin Lu in the amount of \$398,725.75.
- (c) Resolution No. 10413 authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Parametrix, Inc. in the amount of \$27,772.00, plus all applicable taxes, for NE Spring Boulevard, between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE (CIP Plan No. PW-R-174).

10. Public Hearing: None.

11. Study Session Items

- (a) Introduction of the Preliminary 2025-2026 Operating Budget and the 2025-2030 Capital Investment Program Plan

Acting City Manager Carlson thanked the Leadership Team and staff for their extensive effort in preparing the budget and in adapting the preliminary budget to financial policies previously adopted by the Council. She thanked the Council for providing the vision and direction for the budget. She thanked the community for sharing their values and priorities to inform the budget as well. She recalled that the financial forecast presented in July reflected flat revenues in 2025 and slight growth in 2026. There was little room to add new programs but adequate funding is provided to fund ongoing services.

Ms. Carlson said the preliminary budget advances and supports the following Council priorities: 1) environmental stewardship staffing, 2) safe parking pilot program, 3) addition of public safety positions, 4) cross-cultural programming, 5) affordable housing permit fee reduction policies, and 6) extending the term of the Communities of Color Coordinating (CCC) Team and program. She noted limited new investments with a focus on Council priorities including a proposed office of housing to support actions that will help achieve affordable housing targets, additional funding for human services grants, continued capital funding for the Grand Connection design work, capital funding for bicycle and safety investments, resources to process Land Use Code Amendments and to provide permit assistance for small businesses, funds to standardize and enhance tools and practices for community engagement, proactive safety programs, and planning efforts for crisis and emergency management.

Acting City Manager Carlson said the budget enhances transparency in a structure that will help plan for the future to support services and investments to meet the vision of the Council and the community. The budget follows the principles from the updated financial policies adopted by the Council and is organized by the strategic target areas. New financial policies support reserve funds for the Council's priorities and growth and any use of reserve funds would be presented to the Council for approval. Ms. Carlson said she anticipates proposals over the upcoming biennium to support growth, including investments in the KidsQuest Museum and affordable housing. She said the six-year financial plan is new and provides a longer term planning view.

Ms. Carlson said capital investments are important to ensure the City is supporting growth. She said staff plans an in-depth review of the Capital Investment Program (CIP) in 2025 to better plan and deliver capital projects and to align capital needs with future growth.

John Resha, Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Asset Management (FAM) Department, noted that seven discussions with the Council are scheduled through late November, with budget adoption anticipated on November 19. He said the second public hearing on the budget is scheduled for September 24 and the final public hearing will be held November 12. An overview of the budget by strategic target areas will be held over three meetings in October.

Evan Phillips, Financial Strategy and Performance Director, said adoption of the budget will include a number of legislative actions: Development Services Fee ordinance, Utilities Rates ordinances, Water Works Financial Policy Sunset ordinance, human services grants resolution or ordinance, banked property tax resolution, property tax levy ordinance and the umbrella 2025-2026 budget ordinance. Development services fees and utility rates will be discussed on September 24.

Mr. Phillips said the first budget public hearing was held on July 9, and 26 communications were received (22 oral and 4 written). Primary funding interests included bike and pedestrian safety, climate change, public safety and non-profit organization funding. He said comments were submitted via email to the Council and staff. The 2023-2024 community surveys (i.e., business survey, performance survey and budget survey) involved a total of 3,337 respondents and generated 1,377 comments regarding the budget. Mr. Phillips highlighted the priorities identified in the 2024 budget survey including a resilient and secure place where all people feel welcome and valued, livable city with world-class places, reliable and safe transportation system, well-managed and accountable government, equitable and caring community and a community where innovation thrives and all cultures are celebrated and supported.

Mr. Resha said one of the new components of the budget is an immersive digital budget book available at [BellevueWA.gov/Budget](http://BellevueWA.gov/Budget). He said three information sessions will be held by staff to help the public in interacting with the new budget tool. Mr. Phillips noted that information is also provided regarding capital projects by neighborhood.

Dr. Linda Whitehead, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, City Manager's Office, introduced staff's overview of the budget equity toolkit used by City staff to prepare the preliminary budget.

Sara Boyle, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Outreach Administrator, said the purpose of the tool is to help the City understand how the use of resources benefits or burdens historically marginalized communities, including communities of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+ community, low-income populations, people experiencing homelessness, speakers of languages other than English, and immigrants and refugees.

Ms. Boyle recalled that in 2022, the Council directed staff to develop an equity impact tool to apply to the budget. The Diversity Advantage Team and the budget office researched best practices and local and national examples and developed a prototype tool that was tested across



several internal and external-facing departments. The tool was revised in response to staff feedback and, earlier this year, each department utilized the budget equity toolkit in preparing their budgets.

Ms. Boyle said the use of the budget equity toolkit allowed all departments to demonstrate previous and forward-looking investments through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. She noted that the outdated 2014 Diversity Advantage Plan (DAP) made it difficult to align the budgets with DEI goals. However, the equity tool identified opportunities to invest more deeply in consistent community engagement practices, the use and analysis of disaggregated data, and DEI training and education for all staff. Ms. Boyle said staff has been working for several months to update the DAP.

Moving to General Fund resources, Mr. Phillips said resources are often conflated with revenues. While resources can improve revenues, they also include the ongoing beginning fund balance of annual budgets. Mr. Phillips highlighted the actual and forecasted tax revenues for 2019 through 2034. He said property tax revenues are the most stable while REET (real estate excise tax) revenues are the most volatile. Additional key revenues are the sales tax, business and occupation (B&O) tax, and utilities taxes. Mr. Phillips noted a drop in revenues in 2029 with the expiration of the 2008 parks levy and in 2032 with the expiration of the second parks levy.

Mr. Resha described a change in the budgeting process. He said the City has historically appropriated all cash and has accounted for full cost recovery and had interdepartmental charges that were not necessary from an accounting standpoint. He said budgeting and accounting staff worked together to identify and follow best practices to be clear about the appropriations for expenditure. He said one-quarter of the financial plan addresses reserves and staff is not asking the Council to appropriate those reserves. However, the Council may request the use of reserves at any time. He said the new structure allows the public to see and understand the reserves and their purposes.

Mr. Resha said the new budget makes it appear that department budgets have been decreased when in fact they have not and establishes new baselines for department expenditures. He said staff will create a memory bank/list of issues and questions raised by the Council and will follow up on the items throughout the budget process.

The components of the \$1.75 billion preliminary budget are the General Fund (\$792 million), Enterprise (Utilities) operating and capital funds (\$497 million), general capital and equipment rental funds (\$315 million), other funds (\$94 million) and debt service (\$60 million).

Mr. Phillips listed the strategic target areas that guide the operating budget: 1) high-performance government, 2) vibrant economy, 3) safe and efficient transportation system, 4) high-quality built and natural environment, 5) community safety and health, and 6) thriving people and communities. The budget expenditures by those categories are community safety and health (\$510 million), high-performance government (\$275 million), high-quality built and natural environment (\$165 million), thriving people and communities (\$94 million), safe and efficient transportation system (\$80 million) and vibrant economy (\$39 million).

Mr. Resha highlighted key operating investments under each strategic target area. The high-performance government category improves municipal planning and performance, continues staffing for municipal energy efficiency projects and climate change efforts, and establishes a municipal innovation advisory committee. Under the vibrant economy area, investments focus on workforce development, entrepreneurship and small business support; permitting support for small businesses, special events and public space activation; and funding and planning for public art. Transportation system investments protect and maintain current levels of service, allocate funding for Vision Zero program implementation, and provide capital funding to complete major road projects underway and to focus on new investments in neighborhood connectivity, bike and pedestrian facilities, and safety. Investments to address the built and natural environment include the creation of an office of housing to coordinate and improve access to affordable housing, continued streamlining of the permit process, staffing for parks planning and maintenance to meet the commitments of the 2022 levy and continued staffing for evolving initiatives such as Keep Bellevue Beautiful and the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI).

Mr. Resha said key operating investments for community safety and health staff enhanced emergency preparedness and disaster recovery efforts, add funding for opioid and substance disorder crisis response, fund the establishment of a dedicated community court, establish a dedicated police captain for managing large events, and dedicate resources to support domestic violence advocacy. Key investments related to the thriving people and communities target area fund the Human Services Strategic Plan and Human Services Commission recommendations, increase ongoing human services funding by \$1.25 million per year, continue efforts focused on homelessness prevention outreach and safe parking programs, and supports a site selection analysis for a future cross-cultural center and to continue the Cross-Cultural Center without Walls program grants for one more year.

Mr. Phillips said the 2025-2030 CIP Plan will be discussed in greater detail during future meetings. He highlighted annual CIP spending levels within the categories of Fire, Municipal, Parks, Transportation and Utilities. Key CIP projects include Fire Station 10, Fire Station 5, City Hall major maintenance and interim space planning, information technology systems, Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2 design work, parks resource management facility, enhancing the transportation network (i.e., bikes, pedestrians and motorized users), continuing design work on the non-motorized I-405 crossing (Grand Connection), and the ongoing maintenance and replacement of utilities infrastructure.

Mr. Resha said future budget discussions are scheduled for September 24, October 8, October 15, October 22 and October 29.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation. Given the evening's busy agenda, she suggested that Councilmembers submit their questions to staff after the meeting and that staff follow up by providing their responses to all Councilmembers.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed concern that the presentation was longer than anticipated, leaving little time for Council discussion.

Ms. Robinson noted that the purpose of tonight's presentation was to provide an overview and general information about the preliminary budget and CIP Plan in preparation for future discussion. She said the budget book provided to the Council is not paginated, which makes it difficult to identify specific items for discussion. Mr. Phillips said staff is working on numbering the pages and will distribute new books to the Council.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Resha said staff will provide the questions and responses before the public hearing on September 24 if possible. Ms. Zahn clarified that she would be comfortable receiving the questions by that date, even if responses have not been prepared for every question. Mr. Resha suggested that Councilmembers submit their first round of questions by late Wednesday afternoon.

Mayor Robinson suggested that Councilmembers raise their questions now to allow time for staff to prepare responses.

Councilmember Zahn said she appreciated the budget format. She asked about the item to address permitting support for small businesses and special events. She asked about plans and funding for public art and about the site selection for the cross-cultural center. She asked whether there are adequate resources to support economic development for small and mid-sized businesses. She expressed an interest in streamlining the delivery of the CIP Plan.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked about funding for Fire Department personnel and for Police Department recruiting and retention bonuses. He spoke in favor of increased arts funding. He suggested adding funding to the budget to hire a third party to conduct an electrical reliability study based on current and projected growth. He expressed support for increased human services funding and for expanded community outreach. He expressed concern regarding the proposed office of housing, noting that he would prefer to hire staff to address affordable housing permitting versus creating a new office and level of bureaucracy. He would favor funding to further streamline the permitting process for affordable housing and overall housing needs. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the City has a number of policies and dashboards about transparency in policing and asked about related items in the preliminary budget.

Councilmember Stokes said he looks forward to more detailed discussions with staff regarding the budget.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for the proposed increase in human services funding.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for their hard work and said he sent them six questions for follow up. He said he looks forward to hearing more about the budget from staff as well as comments from the public.

Councilmember Hamilton said he appreciated the transmittal letter from the city manager in the meeting materials. He expressed support for the emphasis on housing and affordability and for creating an office of housing to address this critical need. He said he liked the updated comprehensive financial policies, especially Section 7 which he feels would be helpful to community members as well. He said he looks forward to continued public input and Council

discussions with staff. He expressed an interest in the impact of the one percent property tax adjustment.

Councilmember Lee said he looks forward to continued discussion and encouraged staff to provide sufficient time to address everyone's input.

- (b) Great Neighborhoods Program: Initiation of 2024/2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans and recommendation on next set of neighborhood area plans updates.

Acting City Manager Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Great Neighborhoods program, which was initiated by the Council in 2018.

Emil King, Director, Community Development Department, said staff is requesting Council direction to initiate the Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) to update the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans.

Thara Johnson, Acting Planning Director, said the Great Neighborhoods program's objectives are to localize citywide policies that reflect neighborhood priorities through extensive community engagement and to develop local policies to address issues and opportunities to help the community grow in a unique way. Bellevue is divided into 16 neighborhood areas and the program was launched in 2018 to strengthen community connections. Ms. Johnson said volume 1 of the Comprehensive Plan provides citywide policies and volume 2 provides neighborhood-specific goals and policies. The Comprehensive Plan periodic update aligns the neighborhood plans with citywide policies.

Ms. Johnson said that completed plans for the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue neighborhood areas were adopted in 2021. During the process to update those two plans, staff worked with the community and incorporated suggestions to expand the scope of the plans. In 2018, the Council identified the Crossroads area and Newport area for the next round of neighborhood plan updates. Staff proposes addressing the Factoria and Eastgate areas in 2025-2026 and the Lake Hills and West Lake Sammamish areas in 2026-2027. Ms. Johnson said the recommendation regarding the sequencing of neighborhoods is based on a number of factors including the extent of change in an area, equity needs, planning for future important policy initiatives such as transit planning, and coordinating planning for adjacent neighborhood areas.

Teun Deuling, Senior Planner, said the neighborhood planning process covers four phases over approximately one year: 1) discover (Fall 2024), 2) define (January-March 2025), 3) refine (April-June 2025), and 4) review and adopt plans (July-October 2025). Phase 1 identifies core values, issues and priorities. Phase 2 develops strategies and draft plan elements, and Phase 3 refines those draft plans and resolves outstanding issues. During Phase 4, the plans are reviewed by the Planning Commission and their recommendation is forwarded to the Council for final review and adoption.

The key elements of neighborhood plans are land use, urban design, neighborhood identity, public realm and mobility hubs. Mr. Deuling said the neighborhood area planning process

involves significant community engagement to provide a platform for a neighborhood's future growth. He noted plans to hire a cultural outreach assistant to work with the Korean community and for targeted outreach to schools, faith-based organizations, local businesses and older adults.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to initiate work on Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) to update the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans and to confirm staff's recommendations for future rounds of neighborhood planning. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Zahn said she lives in a portion of the Newport neighborhood area that was formerly in the Factoria neighborhood area. She expressed support for the proposed sequencing of future neighborhood planning efforts. She said there are a number of micro-neighborhoods in Newport, largely separated by arterials, that do not have a neighborhood association or community club. She expressed support for cultural outreach assistance and for engaging students in the planning efforts. In the Newport area, she believes it will be especially important to address community gathering spaces, transportation safety and traffic congestion.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and welcomed Mr. Deuling, who previously worked in the Netherlands. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Deuling said staff began working on initial relationship building in the Crossroads and Newport areas this summer. Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked how the City will balance competing interests and priorities. Mr. King said staff looks for continuous improvement in how staff and consultant resources can be effectively deployed to hear from the community.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the proposed neighborhood area sequencing. He encouraged outreach to engage a broad range of community members within a neighborhood.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian encouraged staff to leverage technology to enhance community engagement and participation in the neighborhood planning process.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed support for moving forward with robust community engagement. He asked about online information and whether residents can sign up for periodic notifications. Mr. Deuling said there are separate web pages for the two neighborhoods.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Johnson said the Comprehensive Plan periodic update provides a future land use map. She said increased density is contemplated in both the Crossroads and Newport areas. However, neighborhood area planning is an opportunity to examine changes at a neighborhood level and to review potentially outdated policies and objectives. As an example of the latter, Ms. Johnson said there is a policy in the Crossroads subarea plan stating there shall be no multifamily development in a certain part of that neighborhood. She said that does not align with the current City strategy to add capacity and with state legislation regarding housing. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Johnson said the Planning Commission will review the plans and hold public hearings next summer before adoption of the plans in Fall 2025.

- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

12. Land Use Reports: None.

13. Other Ordinances, Resolution and Motions

(a) Resolution No. 10414 adopting the updated Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m., and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Acting City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the updated Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan.

Michael Shiosaki, Director, Parks and Community Services Department, said this is the final step in a long process of robust public engagement and environmental review. He introduced Rowena Clima, Chair of the Parks and Community Services Board. He said staff requests Council direction regarding the approval of Resolution No. 10414 adopting the Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan. He recalled that during the April 3, 2023, Council meeting, the Council concurred with the Park Board's recommendation on the proposed master plan update and directed staff to complete environmental review on that preferred plan.

Mr. Shiosaki presented a map depicting the 27-acre park site located east of Robinswood Park and north of the I-90 corridor. In 2002, the Council authorized the purchase of the properties that make up Airfield Park with the intent of developing an active community park. He said the site is currently undeveloped and is well located to support active recreation. It is bordered by residential development on the north and west sides and office/business uses to the east, south and west. He said there are significant forested buffers on the west and north side, and vehicular access to the site is at 160<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Mr. Shiosaki said the site had an airfield until 1983 and a municipal landfill from 1951 through 1964. He said there are well-developed trails on the site as well as steep slopes and forested areas on the north half of the site. The southern portion is more feasible for development because it is relatively flat and has commercial uses as neighbors. Mr. Shiosaki acknowledged that the landfill is located in the southern portion of the site.

Mr. Shiosaki presented and described a drawing of the 2012 adopted Master Plan. The primary changes since that time are in the southern portion of the site, with two lighted sports field areas, trail connections, restrooms and parking. He said the plan also includes the expansion of an off-leash area at Robinswood Park one-quarter mile away.

Mr. Shiosaki recalled that City feasibility studies were conducted in 2009, 2017 and 2020. He said it was determined that Airfield Park is the only City-owned property that is large enough to accommodate an aquatic facility. He said a King County regional study in 2019 cited the need for more aquatic facilities in the county. He recalled that in October 2021, the Council directed

staff to begin the Master Plan update to understand current community preferences and to study the impacts on the site. In 2022, the City signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SplashForward to define how to move forward as partners in the aquatic center project.

Mr. Shiosaki said community outreach featured six meetings in 2022, including two Park Board meetings, a neighborhood site walk, two community workshops and a Council discussion. A third community workshop was held on January 19, 2023, followed by the Park Board's recommendation on February 14, 2023 and the Council's consideration of the preferred plan and community input on April 3, 2023.

Mr. Shiosaki said the overall themes of the public input were that the park should be inclusive, safe, environmentally responsible and active. He said 51 percent of the community feedback supported that the park plan provides the right balance of active and passive uses, while 28 percent felt there was too much area devoted to passive uses and 21 percent felt there was too much area for active uses. The passive program elements of most interest to the public are trails, natural areas and picnic areas, with 61 percent of the respondents in support of a covered picnic shelter in the northwest corner of the site. The active program elements with the most community interest are pickleball and an aquatic facility.

Mr. Shiosaki said there has been a suggestion to retain some of the existing parking, originally for a Boeing office, on the eastern edge of the park. He said those parking spaces have not been included in the Master Plan because the aquatic center needs to sit a bit high on the site to avoid the landfill impacts. He said the existing parking is low on the site and making it accessible would involve lowering the aquatic center and a greater disturbance of the landfill material. He said that option does not make sense from a financial standpoint. He noted issues with stormwater runoff from the parking lot as well.

Pam Fehrman, Parks Planning Manager, recalled that on April 3, 2023, the Council concurred with the Parks and Community Services Board and designated a preferred Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan. The updated plan contains an aquatic facility, eight pickleball courts, restrooms, children's playground, multi-use sports field, basketball court, terraced lawn and picnic areas. The plan includes design objectives to conserve the tree canopy to the extent feasible and to provide enough parking to support park activities by maximizing the use of surrounding shared parking at office uses. The plan expands the off-leash area at Robinswood Park and provides an opportunity to improve environmental conditions by updating the 1980s landfill system to today's standards.

The aquatic facility concept includes a recreation pool, warm water/therapy pool, competition pool, spectator seating, a deep water/dive pool, fitness facilities, classrooms, meeting rooms and event space. The environmental review process provided additional opportunities for community engagement and public comments over the past year. On August 1, 2023, the environmental determination was issued and stated that the Airfield Park Master Plan does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. Ms. Fehrman said the determination found that an environmental impact statement (EIS) was not required or needed. However, it included a condition that the Washington State Department of Ecology review any landfill-related development in accordance with the Model Toxics Control Act.

Ms. Fehrman said that funding for the design and construction of Airfield Park is provided by both the 2008 and 2022 park levies. She noted that the design and construction of the park will be phased. She said staff will return with proposals regarding design and construction contracts and aquatic facility partnership agreements as they evolve in the future.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m., and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councilmember Hamilton, liaison to the Parks and Community Services Board, thanked staff for the presentation. He thanked all of the community members who have been engaged in this process. He said Bellevue's current aquatic facility is 50 years old and enhanced facilities are needed. He thanked staff for addressing the tree canopy, natural environment and habitats, security, transportation and on-site contaminants related to the landfill.

Responding to Councilmember Lee regarding the landfill, Mr. Shiosaki said some testing has been completed and more testing will be conducted going forward. Referring to a comment during oral communications, Mr. Shiosaki said that while an aquatic center has potentially not been built over a landfill, structures have been built over old landfills. He acknowledged that the landfill cap is failing and in need of repairs and improvements.

In further response to Mr. Lee, Mr. Shiosaki said the existing parking area discussed above is a good flat area for the pickleball courts.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked Chair Clima and the board members for their work on the plan and with the community. He said he was pleased to see the determination of the environmental review. Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Mr. Shiosaki said the proposed picnic shelter area will likely require the removal of some trees. Mr. Shiosaki said he was unsure whether survey respondents were aware of that potential impact, however.

Mr. Malakoutian said he believes current technologies will enable the project team to mitigate the risks associated with the former airfield and landfill uses. He said the park creates new opportunities for community connections and for rehabilitating the site.

Councilmember Stokes said he appreciated his colleagues' comments and is supportive of the plan. He said he was on the swim team in college and worked as a lifeguard, and he looks forward to the development of the aquatic facility. He said the park will be a great asset for the community.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the robust community outreach. He said he appreciated staff's consideration of community input, including the suggestion regarding the existing parking lot. He said former Councilmember Jennifer Robertson supported the aquatic facility initiative for many years and helped move it forward to this point.



Councilmember Zahn expressed support for the updated Airfield Park Master Plan and encouraged minimal tree removal. She said she appreciated the phased approach to the site to be able to begin constructing certain park elements as soon as possible.

Mayor Robinson recalled her past suggestion about exploring the ability to tap into the deep sewer line on the site to help heat the pools. She said she and Councilmember Stokes served on the Park Board when the park was originally proposed. She said there was an interest in a swimming pool facility at that time. She noted that she voted against the pool, which she later regretted.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve Resolution No. 10414, and Councilmember Hamilton seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson thanked Susan Pappalardo of Splash Forward and all of the other community members who have worked to advocate and fundraise for the aquatic center. Councilmember Stokes added this thanks as well.

14. Written Reports: None.
15. Unfinished Business: None.
16. New Business: None.
17. Adjournment

At 10:30 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw